

The Alliance Herald

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

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ONE EAR TO THE GROUND.

Governor McKelvie has sprung two surprises on the state of Nebraska in rapid succession. One of them is the announcement that he will issue a call for a special session of the legislature, which will be asked to convene some time in February to consider a proposal to impose a tax of 1 cent a gallon on gasoline in lieu of the present tax for building purposes, as well as two or three other plans that he had in mind.

The announcement of the extra session was made Monday. It came so suddenly a huge gasp was about the only result discernible, although there will be plenty of discussion after the public has caught its breath. However, the governor allowed no time for this, for on the day following, at a conference of some thirty-six state officials, he suggested a voluntary reduction in the wages amounting to 5 per cent. The meeting had been called to discuss possible savings in expenditures, to meet the demand for economy over the state, and the salary cut was said to be an afterthought on the part of the governor.

Already there are objections to these suggestions from the governor. An extra session of the legislature, if it lasted for only one day, would cost the state over ten thousand dollars, it is said. On the other hand, a one-cent tax on gasoline would bring in only about half the money that is needed for road construction. The last legislature appropriated \$2,133,741 from the state aid road tax to meet federal funds for the two-year period. This is at the rate of \$1,566,870 a year. A one-cent tax on gasoline would bring in only \$729,763, judging from the amount of gasoline sold in the state in the two-year period ending December 31, 1920.

Even though this gasoline tax would bring but half enough to pay for road construction, there would be some other advantages. Tourists traveling through the state and using Nebraska roads would help to pay for their construction. Trucks and heavy cars would pay a proportionately higher rate than small cars, although they do so now under the registration fee system. The governor seems to think that real estate and other property now bear too great a tax burden. There is but one defect in the plan and that is that the greatest damage to roads in this part of the state is done, not by heavy trucks and heavy pleasure cars, but by farm wagons heaving in heavy loads of farm produce. One farm wagon with narrow tires can damage a road more than fifty automobiles, and these would escape the direct tax planned for those who use the roads most.

So far as the voluntary salary reduction is concerned, it is already causing considerable consternation among those on the payroll, although there is not much reason why it should. The reduction isn't to be a straight 5 per cent, but 5 per cent on all amounts over a thousand dollars, which means a small sum to most salaried state employees. As a matter of fact, this 5 per cent reduction, voluntary though it be, amounts to very little considering the tremendous salary boost given by the last legislature, which fixed the salaries of code secretaries at \$5,000 a year, the governor and supreme court at \$7,500, and after doubling the salaries of these officers it added 50 per cent to those of the deputies and generously increased the allowance for clerks. It has been suggested that 5 per cent isn't much of a cut, but that if it isn't taken voluntarily, the next legislature, elected by people who insist on economy, will probably cut the stipends a whole lot more than that. The general belief is that the governor's suggestion is a sort of grandstand play to the voters.

The chief thing of interest about the two propositions is that they show that Governor McKelvie has his ear to the ground and is doing his best to make the taxpayers feel better. In addition to the salary cut, other means of saving money were discussed, and the result will be wholesome. It begins to appear that Governor McKelvie has his eye on high political honors, and these cannot be attained unless the voters feel friendly toward the administration. Prospective candidates for the governorship are already making the main plank of their platforms the reducing of state expenditures, and

economy in administration is bound to grow more popular as the campaign progresses. It may be, before the governor gets far with his senatorial ambitions, he will be in the same state of mind as the backwoods politician, who told his constituents that he already had one ear to the ground, and the chief regret of his life was that the Lord had so fashioned him that he couldn't get both of them to the earth at the same time.

WHERE THE CLUBS STAND.

The Antioch News interviewed a respected Alliance citizen the other day, and while the chances are that the editor did most of the talking, and took silence as assent, it may be just as well to devote a few inches of space to clear up any mistaken ideas that may be held by either the Alliance man or the Antioch editor.

The interview quotes the Alliance man as saying: "I worked hard for years and saved up enough to pay for a little home, and now it is taking every cent I can rake and scrape to pay the taxes to keep from losing it, while Lions, Cubs and Rotary machines are telling the world that everybody is happy for the privilege of handing over all they make for payment of taxes."

Nobody is denying that taxes are higher than a cat's back. This one Alliance man pays them no more grudgingly than nine out of ten men that he meets on the street. We have never, in our short but fairly eventful career, come upon any man who paid his taxes, whether high or low, with any great show of cheerfulness.

But this is the point that should be made—The Lions club, the Rotary club, the chamber of commerce and every organization that we know is seeking to reduce public expenditures rather than increase them. The city manager plan, agitation for which was started by the Rotary club, has done more to bring expenses down to a sane basis than any other one thing. The city levy is a notch higher than it was last year, the reason for the increase being that the present business-like administration is establishing a sinking fund to pay off indebtedness incurred under past administrations, which no provision was ever made to meet. Those who are interested can discover that the city manager has more than saved his salary for this year, and that the city's affairs have not been in a more healthy shape for years and years.

It does no particular good to howl about high taxes. The thing to do is to find ways to reduce them. The organizations referred to, instead of cheering each new improvement that will increase taxes, have for months been doing their best to decrease the heavy cost of government. Their efforts have had a most salutary effect, as may be discovered by anyone who desires to learn the facts.

THE VISIT OF DR. LORENZ.

Dr. Charles H. Mayo, long suspected of being one of the greatest surgeons in the world, has proved his right to the title. Other and lesser

have raised a rumpus over the visit to this country of Dr. Adolph Lorenz of Vienna, a famous orthopedic surgeon, who has developed a non-operative treatment of fractures, dislocations and bone deformities. The chief objection to the Vienna surgeon seems to be that the doctor, or a hospital, or a group of men are making money out of the visit of the Austrian, in an unethical way. That word ethics means more to a good many surgeons than any other one thing, unless you count the fee.

Dr. Mayo suggests that attacks on Dr. Lorenz, and obstacles placed in his way by members of the medical fraternity, may eventually effect a change in the attitude of the country toward the entire profession. And he's right about it. The average man knows little, of course, of Dr. Lorenz' methods or the men who are behind him. They do know, however, that he has effected some startling cures. And that's all they care about. The parent of a crippled child, desperate over its condition, doesn't care a snap about ethics or anything else. What that parent wants is the opportunity to take that helpless child to someone who may help it. Those of us who have never been hopelessly crippled or hopelessly ill do not know how much hope can be built upon a slender thread.

The Rochester surgeon tells the men in his profession some plain facts. Dr. Lorenz should be helped and encouraged in his work by every surgeon, physician and hospital authority in the country, he declares. "Doctor Lorenz is deeply versed and widely experienced in his specialty. His methods of treatment are of little or no value in treating deformities of the soft parts of the body, or those due to nerve destruction. He could not, at any rate, personally treat more than perhaps one in a hundred of the cases in his own line that may be brought to him. But if his visit to this country results in nothing more than the disclosure of great numbers of hitherto unknown cases, he will have achieved a great work that should be encouraged by the authorities of every state and one that he can safely leave to be carried on by the medical profession of this country."

An Omaha newspaper is making a great effort to have Dr. Lorenz come to Nebraska. The Omaha mayor, city officials, chamber of commerce, individual surgeons and others are in favor of extending an official invitation, but the Douglas county medical society, while apparently in favor of the visit, has delayed sending the request, without which the surgeon will not come, until it is quite probable that other cities will get in ahead and Dr. Lorenz will have no time to visit Omaha and Nebraska.

SILK SOCKS AND SODA WATER.

(Minneapolis Journal.)
Somebody is always taking the joy out of life. Just as we get all worked up over the colossal burden of taxes the government makes us carry to buy armaments, along comes some Washington chap with statistics to prove that last year's bill for the army was mere pocket money compared to what we spent for chewing gum, silk socks and soda water. To say the least, it is disquieting.

With armament reduction well in hand at the Washington conference, we had been congratulating ourselves on the blessings in sight. Then along come the figures that do not lie, or the liars that figure to load us up with another burden of moral worries.

According to internal revenue returns, the American people in 1920 paid the following bills: For the army, \$418,000,000; for tobacco, \$1,151,000,000; for chewing gum and candy, \$750,000,000; for soda water and confectations, \$834,000,000; for amusements such as base ball, cabarets and movies, \$897,000,000; and for silk stockings, perfumes and other matters of milady's wardrobe, \$959,000,000.

Of course, one can moralize over these figures in almost any fashion. In the last analysis it comes down to

the question: "When is a luxury a luxury?"

When we Americans get to spending on Lady Nicotine nearly as much as is required for a first-class navy, it might seem that a good thing is being overdone. When we spend \$834,000,000 at soda fountains it would appear that community drives all over the country should have no trouble in raising their budgets. Yet they do. With the cry heard everywhere that there is a shortage of money to meet vital needs, still figures show that much money is spent for nonessentials. And so the story goes.

Yes, somebody is always taking the joy out of life.

Harry Thiele has some mighty good values in Ivory this week.

COST OF GOVERNMENT.

The average American family of five was receiving the benefits of national government for \$33 a year before the war. The cost is now \$214.80. In Great Britain, the price went from \$102 to \$548.90; in France from \$122.80 to \$633.30. The Italian family before the war had a government charge against it of \$70.70. It is now required to pay \$1642.65. The ratio of increase in national debts in these four countries was nearly 1000 per cent, in military expenditures about 350 per cent; for other governmental expenses more than 700 per cent. Where the figures should be presented in the largest, blackest letters is on the walls of the meeting place of the disarmament conference.

Ford

THE UNIVERSAL CAR

The Ford Sedan is the favorite family car, seats five comfortably. While an enclosed car with permanent top, it has large windows, and may in a minute be changed to a most delightful open car with always a top protecting against the sun. In inclement weather it is a closed car, dust-proof, water-proof, cold-proof. Finely upholstered. Equipped with electric starting and lighting system and demountable rims with 3½-inch tires all around. A real family car. Anybody can safely drive it. It has all the conveniences of an electric car with the economy which goes with Ford cars, low cost of purchase price, small cost of operation and maintenance. Won't you come in and look at it?

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